

At the Crossroads

By A. W. PEACH
Barton Ellis looked with somber eyes through his office window at the building beyond the square, with his thoughts on the problem before him. He knew that he had come to the crossroads, and that road that invited him was not the road that he wanted to take.

In line with his gaze was the dark hair and round cheek of the girl who was worth far more than the meager salary he had been able to pay her. She had given his lawyer's income. She had been faithful to him, and a quiet composure had grown up between them until the thought of losing her became a constant terror to him.

The time to the papers on his desk. The estate which had been in his care was to be settled. He had handled it so well that it had yielded \$10,000 more than any one would suspect. By omitting that account from his papers, he had \$10,000 more to live on and use in the world would ever be the wiser.

With that money he could place himself in a position that would bring more opportunity, and his present hand-to-mouth struggle and make possible, perhaps, a home, and in spite of himself he glanced at the dark head and watched the white, capable fingers busy over his letters.

He withdrew from the papers in front of him a set of three, and folded the others into the envelope. The perforation broke out over him, and he wavered; then he sealed the envelope. His forehead had made possible the thousands. That would be his.

The golden glow of the late sunset touched the great building beyond the square. He closed his desk with a trembling hand, and turned.

"Time to quit, Ruth. Suppose we go to lunch together," he suggested.

She looked up with a smile, her eyes over which long lashes laid their curve. "Just three more lines, please," she said, "and I'll be ready."

Outside the building they turned in the direction of a favorite restaurant. On the way he came to a mail box, and he held the long envelope ready to drop it in. In a second he paused, then he dropped the letter in and started quickly along.

Over the shaded table in the quiet corner of the little restaurant he faced her. Never had she seemed so sweet, wholesome and sincere to him with the memory of his own guilt upon him.

"Ruth, I sometimes wonder why you are so good. You have given so much and command better conditions and salary than I can give you," he queried.

She lifted her direct gaze. "Please don't talk shop. I—I like—I think you have a future before you, and I want to be in it," she answered.

"His interests were those that hurt as though it lay what in the darkness of the mailbox. He turned the conversation, and they chatted off this and that, "the nothings that make up life," until they parted.

The next day at his office the bottom fell out of the sky, for she sent him word that she would leave at the office. He lay on his sofa, half heavy with him, his figure frantic on ways by which he might have discovered his secret. But the day after she appeared, the same winsome, comforting presence that had come to mean so much to him.

On that day he received his second shock. On that day into his office came the gray-headed McLean, head of the great investment firm of the north of the State. Quickly he came to business.

"Ellis, I happen to know of the fine way you handled the Dartmore estate. It was a clean ten or twelve thousand above what was normally expected. We decided to make you our legal agent here, and the retainer will be satisfactory. As a added naming a sum that made Ellis catch his breath. 'Of course you will accept?'"

When the whirling room had settled Ellis came to with a snap. He had not sent the money, and yet the gruff Scotchman had referred to it. What could be?

He looked in the direction of Ruth, found her dark head turned in his direction.

"I couldn't help hearing, Barton. What a glorious opportunity!" she said eagerly.

But something in her eyes—a look beyond his analysis struck through him—a sense of great hurt—of love in agony.

He sprang to his feet with a single cry, "Ruth!"

She came to him with a rush, hiding her face against his coat, while his arms pressed her tighter and tighter to him.

"Ruth—you know?"

Her head moved on down his shoulder. Her tears sank from light down into shadow, but the sound of her sobs did not cease; but the chill that went over him brought the dead calm of despair.

"Tell me. You saved me, but how?" he begged.

"You forgot that I had seen the papers," she said, and then breathing hard she told him how she had withdrawn her own sad fortune left her by her father, and how much use of her experience in his office she had.

FINANCIAL
WILKES-BARRE COLLIERY COMPANY FIRST MORTGAGE SIX PER CENT SINKING FUND GOLD BONDS, DUE 1923.

Pursuant to terms of mortgage dated September 1, 1921, the undernamed invitees of above bonds, due August 1, 1923, at a price not exceeding \$12,240, the sum due to the trustee, shall be entitled to receive interest on the bond fund, stating numbers of bonds, addressed to GARDIR TRUST COMPANY, Trustee Sinking Fund, Wilkes-Barre, Pa., and the amount of interest which will be received until 3 P. M., August 16, 1921.

GARDIR TRUST COMPANY, Trustee
GEORGE H. STUART, 3d, Treasurer, Philadelphia, Pa., July 23, 1921.

DIVIDENDS
HAMILTON TRUST COMPANY 600 N. Broad St., Philadelphia, Pa., on or before Monday, August 1, 1921, the sum of \$12,00 per share on the capital stock of the Company, payable August 1, 1921.

LEVI R. FRANCK, Secretary.

Proposals
SEALED PROPOSALS FOR BALLOON BOATS will be received at Room 100, 10th floor, 200 South Broad St., Philadelphia, Pa., on or before Monday, August 1, 1921, at 12 o'clock noon, at which time and place the same will be opened and awarded to the lowest responsible bidder (subject to the approval of Council). Bids must be filed in accordance with the rules of the Board of Directors, the sum not exceeding \$12,240, the sum due to the trustee, shall be entitled to receive interest on the bond fund, stating numbers of bonds, addressed to GARDIR TRUST COMPANY, Trustee Sinking Fund, Wilkes-Barre, Pa., and the amount of interest which will be received until 3 P. M., August 16, 1921.

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